

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium  
Elaboration for Argumentative Performance Task Full Writes  
(Draft, 6/2/2013)  
Grades 6-8, High School

Definition of Elaboration

Elaboration is the process of developing ideas by providing supporting details. These details may take the form of facts, definitions, examples (including selected, purposeful scenarios/anecdotes), descriptions, and quotations - to name a few. In argumentative writing, a writer elaborates by developing arguments to support a claim. Thoughtful elaboration is guided by the purpose for the writing and the needs of the audience.

Levels of Elaboration

Listed support/elaboration: A list of source-based arguments, facts, details, and/or source-based evidence. This list can easily be reordered without changing or confusing the meaning of the text.

General layered elaboration: A sentence-to-sentence progression of source-based arguments, fact, details, and/or source-based evidence that generally develops and supports the claim. Source-based evidence, if present, may be in the form of general or imprecise references. Re-ordering of the text might impair the connection of ideas.

Specific layered elaboration: A sentence-to-sentence progression of source-based arguments that specifically develops and supports the claim using precise language. A writer integrates specific and relevant source-based evidence-facts and details-into his or her arguments. Re-ordering of the text would more than likely impair the connection of ideas.

Some Argumentative Techniques/Approaches

- Claim stated and maintained
- Sources are integrated in support of claim
- Specific purpose-specific vocabulary
- Problem solving
- Compromise solution or qualification of argument
- Alternate and opposing claims are addressed (acknowledged, rebutted, etc.)
- Rhetorical questions
- Logical reasoning (e.g., causal, arguing from analogy or definition, etc.)

Note: forms/genres (e.g., essays, speeches, letters, magazine articles, website articles, etc.) affect elaboration.